



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



**San Juan Island
National Historical Park**





The National Park Service

San Juan Island National Historical Park was created in 1966 to commemorate the mid-19th century issues and events that led to the final settlement of the boundary between the United States and Great Britain.

More than 250,000 people visit each year to learn more about the celebrated “Pig War” crisis, the 12-year joint occupation of the island by British and American troops and how it affected the world we know today. They also come to explore several spectacular trails in hopes of spotting wildlife that includes killer whales and bald eagles.



The park’s small staff and dedicated cadre of volunteers strive to:

- * Provide a fulfilling park experience by creating a positive environment
- * Foster an appreciation of history and nature, using interpretive techniques that provoke, inspire and inform
- * Illuminate for the visitor how diplomacy was used to peacefully settle an international dispute that could have led to open warfare.



Our responsibility to preserve our natural and historical resources for future generations, and to provide efficient visitor services today, is only possible through the efforts of committed volunteers. As a prospective volunteer of San Juan Island National Historical Park you will no doubt have a good many questions about what to expect of a VIP tour of duty on the island. The information compiled in this handbook should answer most of those questions.



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A FEW BASICS

San Juan Island, about 16 1/2 miles long and about 6 1/2 miles wide (at its midsection), is the second largest island in the San Juan Archipelago. About 8,000 people are counted full-time residents, but the number swells to twice that in the summer season. The park is the largest public land holding on the island. It is composed of 1,752 acres of prairies, woodlands, sand dunes and beaches, seven historic structures, numerous ruins and a mid-19th century English formal garden, reconstructed in 1972. About 1,223 acres compose American Camp and 529 acres English Camp. The sites are 13 miles apart by county road. Both sites are national historic landmarks. Ten permanent employees, under the leadership of Superintendent Peter Dederich, are scattered among the Administration, Ranger Activities, Resource Management and Maintenance divisions.

Administration, headed by Maureen Briggs, telephone (360) 378-2240, is located at park headquarters, 125 Spring St., in Friday Harbor, and is responsible for park planning, operations, budgeting and personnel management. Administration activates RV site services such as telephone, power and vault pump out and also reimburses ferry fares and other expenses. **Interpretation**, 378-2902, oversees visitor center operations, volunteer coordination, summer programming, education, community relations and park publications. Park hosts serve under the Interpretation division, supervised by lead interpreter, Mike Vouri. **Protection**, 378-2902, is responsible for law enforcement, fire fighting and prevention, safety management, special use activities and resource protection. All emergencies are handled through the Protection division. Protection Ranger Ron Heeren also serves as the park safety officer. **Resource Management**, led by Bill Gleason, 378-2240, is responsible for managing and monitoring the park's natural and cultural resources. **Maintenance**, headed by Jerry McElyea, 378-4407, maintains buildings, grounds and trails, the park alarm system and mechanized equipment. Work orders are submitted to the maintenance foreman through division managers.



PARK HOST RV SITES

Volunteers must provide their own housing, such as a motor home or trailer. You will be promptly reimbursed for the cost of your fare for the initial ferry ride out to the island. The fare may run as high as \$150, depending on the size of your rig, so please retain your receipt. There is no charge for the return leg to the mainland. *The park operates on a tight base budget so we are unable to pay*



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stipends or reimburse mileage that may be incurred when driving to work. There are two RV pads each at American and English camps. The sites are hardened, leveled and graveled with fairly good access for backing and parking. Both sites hook-up to wells. Vaults must accommodate gray water and septic, so conservation is paramount. A dump station is located next to the sewage treatment plant, just off Tucker Avenue, in Friday Harbor. A washer and dryer are provided for volunteers only at the park maintenance facility at English Camp. The electrical systems at both sites were upgraded to 50 amps in 1999. You may want to bring surge suppressors to cope with occasional power irregularities. Please remember that electricity is expensive, so try to conserve. Avoid running heaters when away from your RV. Telephone connections are provided for local calls only, however long-distance calls are permitted through calling card services. The well water, especially at American



Camp, has a high sodium content so a good in-line water filter is necessary. Be sure bring plenty of hose for connections. Cans are provided for garbage. The park recycles aluminum and glass. Propane is available on the island, but is more expensive than on the mainland. On-site deliveries are available at an extra charge. RV maintenance services on the island are minimal.

AMERICAN CAMP

The sites at **American Camp** are a short distance off the entrance road and set among a grove of Douglas firs. Each pad has a scenic view, through the trees and across the meadow, to the Strait of Juan De Fuca and the Olympic Peninsula. There is a private picnic area in front of each pad. The visitor center is about 100 yards from the pads. The center serves as an exhibition area, library and archive and is the administrative center for the branches of Interpretation, Resource Management and Law Enforcement. It has all of the comforts: heat, carpet, refrigerator and restrooms with flush toilets and tap water (cold only). The pads can accommodate RVs up to 41 feet long. American Camp park hosts alternate serving the counters in the American Camp visitor center and the headquarters contact station in Friday Harbor.



At **English Camp**, the sites are just off a dirt service road, about a mile and half from West Valley Road, set in a quiet glade nestled in the shelter of Garrison Bay. The service road entrance is directly across West Valley Road from the park maintenance facility. The sites are somewhat close together



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so privacy is limited. The pads can accommodate RVs up to 41 feet long. While the pads are fully serviced, the working conditions in the English Camp visitor center are primitive in comparison with American Camp. The primary challenge is isolation from the rest of the interpretive staff at American Camp, as the NPS lead interpreter visits the site infrequently during the height of the summer season. Since 2001, the Oregon Museum of Science & Industry (OMSI) has conducted a youth summer camp several hundred yards away with about 40 children in each group from mid-June through early August. Volunteers and staff at English Camp operate with limited supervision. The visitor center is located in the former British Royal Marines barracks, a 19th century clapboard structure with two inefficient fireplaces and no insulation. Needless to say it is chilly when the northern end of the island is socked in with rain and fog, as it can be early in the season. Additionally, the site has vault toilets (they don't flush), located about 200 yards across the parade ground from the barracks. Staff must be in good physical condition to work at English Camp. On the plus side, the site has a spectacular formal garden, is the venue for most evening programming and features the best clam digging and crabbing on San Juan Island, minutes by foot from the RV pads.



LIVING ON SAN JUAN ISLAND: SOME BASICS

These sites are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis and are free of charge to volunteers who are working 32 hours a week in the park. *Assignment to a site does not necessarily mean the*

volunteer will work exclusively at that site, as the park must staff three visitor centers. Shower facilities are available in Friday Harbor and Roche Harbor if you do not have these aboard your RV or trailer. Again, a complimentary washer and dryer unit exclusively for VIPs is located in the park maintenance facility. You are strongly urged to use these machines to help conserve water supplies, which are not limitless.





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GUIDELINES: Trailer pads must be vacated within 48 hours of completion of your volunteer appointment. If this presents a problem, contact Mike Vouri, volunteer coordinator, at 378-2902. Quiet hours are from 9:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m.

FERRIES: Main access to the island is by Washington State Ferry. Summer crossing are \$26.40 for vehicle and driver and \$8.20 per passenger in vehicle for seniors (65+). Non-senior rates are \$36.00 and \$9.60. Fares are subject to change. Normal crossing time is 1 1/2 hours. RVs are charged according to length. **Ferries do not accept credit cards.** For more information call (206) 464-6400 or see www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries.



AIRLINES: **Harbor Airlines** and **West Isle Air** have regularly scheduled flights to Boeing Field in Seattle with shuttle connections to SeaTac International Airport. **Kenmore Air** operates a seaplane to and from Lake Union in downtown Seattle, with limousine, shuttle or taxi service to SeaTac.



MAIL: The mailing address for American Camp volunteers is 503 Eagle Cove Drive, Friday Harbor, WA 98250; at English Camp, 4585 West Valley Road, Friday Harbor, WA 98250. You must advise the Friday Harbor Post Office of your presence on the island before they will deliver to the mailboxes at these addresses. Please do not use the park address for your U.S. Mail, especially packages, during the summer. Packages may be received at the park headquarters address (125 Spring St.) through national delivery services such as FedEx, United Parcel Service or DHL.

AROUND THE ISLAND:

American and English camps are 13 miles apart and located 6 and 9 miles, respectively, from Friday Harbor. Gasoline prices are high on the island, so economical transportation is recommended for commuting to and from work and town.

WEATHER: In June and July, temperatures range in the 60s and 70s (F) during the day and drop into the 50s in the evening. Rain is not uncommon. It turns warmer and drier in August, though temperatures rarely exceed 85 degrees. The island is subject to high southwest winds during the summer. The large flags at both camps should not be flown during high winds.



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PUBLIC SERVICES: Banks are conveniently located (**ATMs** are scattered around Friday Harbor and Roche Harbor), as is the post office and pharmacy. A **medical clinic** with general practice physicians in Friday Harbor has provisions for helicopter evacuation (very expensive) in case of emergency. The island has an excellent **emergency medical technician** organization with ambu-



lances. Several dentists are in practice on the island. The nearest **hospitals** are in Anacortes, Mount Vernon, Sedro Woolley and Bellingham, all on the mainland. Restaurants abound on the island, along with a brew pub and other watering holes. Basic essentials are available from three **grocery stores** in or near Friday Harbor and one at Roche Harbor, as well as a two-screen movie theater and several convenience stores with **video rentals**. The island does not have large discount stores. The island has two **Internet** providers, **The Computer Place**, 378-8488 or **Rock Island**, 378-5884. Advisory: Use of America Online or Earthlink to connect to

the Internet require a long-distance call to mainland servers.

CLOTHING: You will be to purchase a daily work uniform composed of dark green trousers or slacks and either short- or long- sleeve khaki shirts with epaulets. Outfitters such as Cabela's and L.L. Bean are good sources. A matching (if possible) jacket will be necessary on cool mornings or rainy days; a sweater that you can wear in the office or under your jacket also is a good addition. If you chill easily, consider packing thermal underwear! You will be given a name bar and a baseball cap with the NPS Volunteer insignia when you arrive. The park will send each VIP four (4) shoulder patches to sew on shirts, sweaters and or a jacket. More are available, if needed, when you arrive. Patches should be centered on the left sleeve, one inch below the shoulder seam. Bring comfortable shoes that compliment your uniform, and boots designed for walking over rough terrain and through tall grass and brush. Light canvas shoes are not appropriate for walking in the park.



PETS: Pets are welcome, but **must be leashed** at all times in the park and are not allowed in park buildings. An off-leash area is located at South Beach, east of the main parking area below the tide line. Do not allow your pet to chase wildlife. Pick up excrement around the pads. Finally, if your pet becomes a problem -- i.e., biting or excessive barking -- you may be asked to leave.

WILDLIFE AND PESTS: Island wildlife includes mammals such black-tailed deer, red fox, river otter, mink and raccoons. Do not feed wildlife. No poisonous snakes are indigenous to the island, but black widow and brown recluse spiders have been sighted on occasion. Yellow jackets are numerous, especially at English Camp in late August.



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DUTIES

As a Park Host at San Juan Island National Historical Park, we prefer you to work Memorial Day through Labor Day, a minimum of 32 hours per week (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) under the supervision of the park lead interpreter/volunteer coordinator Mike Vouri. You will be involved in a variety of interesting activities during your stay.

Visitor Service/Information: This involves working rotating tours of duty at each of the park's three visitor centers. The person performing this service is frequently the initial and oftenthe only contact the visitor has with the National Park Service, so the impression left with the public is very important. Your duties will include answering questions about the park, giving directions, handling sales of books and related materials, and keeping track of the number of people with whom you talk.



Living History Interpretation: This will put your acting talents to work. You can wear reproduction 1860s period clothing to reenact camp life situations at English camp and American Camp.

Formal Garden Maintenance/Interpretation: The formal garden at English Camp is a focal point for today's visitor, just as it was for people during the joint occupation. San Juan Island NPS volunteer Wilma Munsey (378-5196) coordinates garden activities.

Recreation Trail/Site Maintenance: With more than 1750 acres of historic landscape including six historic buildings as well as numerous historic remains, miles of beach front and several trails, there is plenty of work to do. You supply the skill and energy, and we provide all the necessary tools and a list of projects. Please remember that all work is done with NPS equipment and according to NPS standards. Check with VIP coordinator Mike Vouri, 378-2902, or maintenance foreman Jerry McElyea, 378-4407, before starting any repair job, no matter how minor. Park grounds and historic structures form an archaeological reserve protected by federal and state government. No alterations can be made to buildings or grounds without permission.

We have tried to include all of the possible areas in which you will be able to contribute. While we encourage you to get involved in as many activities as possible, the only one in which your participation is essential is the visitor service/information program at our visitor centers. It is important to remember that your contribution, whatever form it takes, will be significant because it will have helped us better serve the visitor and preserve park resources.